2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction: France's commitment

Working paper submitted by France

France wishes to strongly reaffirm its commitment to the resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction. It urges all States concerned to implement that resolution in order to move towards a lasting peace in the Middle East and the creation in the region of a zone free of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

1. France is already actively contributing to the creation of conditions conducive to the achievement of the objectives of the 1995 resolution.

First, it is making continued efforts to resolve tensions in the region. France is heavily involved in the Near East peace process and is working for stability in the region. It was for this purpose that France launched the Union for the Mediterranean project, which held its first Summit on 13 July 2008. On that occasion, the joint declaration adopted at the end of the Summit reaffirmed the intention of all parties to work towards the establishment in the Near East of a zone free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, and their delivery systems, together with an effective mutual verification system.

A second important area of France's work for the effective implementation of the 1995 resolution involves ensuring respect for the nuclear non-proliferation commitments made by all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Alongside its partners in the Group of Six, France is striving to reach a negotiated settlement to the Iranian nuclear crisis, which is threatening peace and security in the region. As the Security Council recalled in its resolutions 1747 (2007) and 1803 (2008) on the Iranian nuclear situation, a solution to the Iranian nuclear issue would contribute to global non-proliferation efforts and to realizing the objective of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, including their means of delivery.

France is also working for the implementation of the 1995 resolution through its steadfast support for the universalization of the principal non-proliferation

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instruments, factors for collective security, in the framework of its bilateral relations with the countries of the region and in relevant multilateral forums. It calls upon all States that have not yet acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to do so, and to implement it fully in the meantime.

France also encourages all the States of the region to become parties to the other conventions and instruments in place: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism; the additional protocols to the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards agreements; and the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (The Hague Code of Conduct).

In order to counter proliferation more effectively, France provides assistance in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in the region, as demonstrated, for example, by its organization of a seminar in Abu Dhabi in October 2009. It also calls upon all countries in the region to join the Proliferation Security Initiative, which enables an operational response to be made to trafficking resulting in proliferation.

Lastly, France strongly encourages all States in the region to support and actively participate, from the outset, in the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. That treaty, once in force, would enable, in particular, the expansion of verification in States that have not placed all their nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. In anticipation of the treaty, France calls upon all States concerned that have not done so already to declare an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, and to place as many nuclear facilities as possible under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

France supports and participates in action by the European Union, which is also strongly committed to working for the implementation of the 1995 resolution. For example, the European Union organized a seminar on the issue in June 2008 and, in connection with the Review Conference, proposed the organization of a new exercise to begin examination of the practical and technical questions raised by the introduction in the Middle East of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Lastly, civil nuclear cooperation can contribute towards raising confidence in the region, allowing the countries concerned to work together to address the challenges of climate change, development and energy security. As the President of the French Republic recalled at the International Conference on Access to Civil Nuclear Energy, held in Paris on 8 and 9 March 2010, France is prepared to cooperate in the field of civil nuclear energy with all countries that respect their international obligations. Through cooperation with its partners in the region it would also like to contribute to creating an environment suitable for the development of civil nuclear energy in the best conditions for non-proliferation, safety and security. Accordingly, it has signed eight cooperation agreements with countries in the region and more are on the way.

2. France would like the 2010 Review Conference to give renewed impetus to the implementation of the 1995 resolution.

The 2010 Review Conference should be an opportunity for discussion of and for giving political impetus to, six priorities to be achieved by 2015 in order to attain the goals of the 1995 resolution, alongside the political efforts needed to calm tensions and resolve sources of conflict:

(a) Countries in the region should accede to and implement the principal nuclear non-proliferation instruments by: placing additional facilities that are not currently subject to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards under such safeguards; adopting the International Atomic Energy Agency additional protocol; and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty;

(b) States in the region should accede to and implement instruments to counter the proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery;

(c) All States in the region should adopt specific non-proliferation measures, including: having an effective export control mechanism; criminalizing acts of proliferation in accordance with resolution 1540 (2004); suppressing the financing of proliferation; and securing nuclear and radioactive materials;

(d) States in the region should resume their discussions on the establishment of confidence-building measures;

(e) There should be an intensification of international and regional efforts aimed at providing a firm response to the proliferation crises threatening the region;

(f) Regional cooperation on civil nuclear energy should be developed, in coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

France proposes that these priorities should form the basis of a concrete and realistic plan of action for the Review Conference to adopt at the end of its work.

3. France supports the organization of an international conference on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

France proposes that discussion of the effective implementation of this plan of action should be begun at an international conference, bringing together all the States in the region, the five permanent members of the Security Council and other interested States, as well as the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency.